

Essay topic: How are you inspired by Batswana women in political leadership roles and the importance of gender parity in government?

What if Eve was the first person on Earth? What if man was made from the rib of the woman? What if the first ever evolution was that of a woman? These questions are not aimed at angering the Christians or the evolutionists, but rather to make us think about whether women would be held at a higher state than men had these took place. Modern day history has erased women who were part of crafting the world we live in into what it is today and so leaving young girls who dream of changing lives and the world with little to no inspiration. The world we live in focuses so much on nurturing men to be the best version of themselves, but who nurtures women to be the best version of themselves?

Botswana has had its fair share of great women in politics. Women who have not been afraid of being firsts at somethings and succeeding at them. Therefore, proving to young Botswana ladies like myself that just because something has never been done it does not make it impossible. These women include the likes of Dr Gaositwe. T Chiepe also popularly known as ‘the woman of many firsts,’ who was the first female member of the Botswana parliament, the first female educational officer and the first female to be awarded a postgraduate degree in the country, just to name a few.

There have also been females who have proved that knowledge indeed does not lie on grey hair. That one can be the youngest in the room and have the loudest, most impactful voice. Such women have been the youngest at big tables and have landed their voices in important issues and influenced the most beneficial policies for Botswana. These women include the likes of Bogolo Kenewendo who was the youngest member of the eleventh parliament and all others before it. Kenewendo became one of the few women politicians in Botswana to talk about women and children’s rights at a national stage, as well as inclusivity in the digital world.

We have women who have also inspired us to persevere through anything for the benefit of the majority. Women who have pushed for policies that would benefit the country to be implemented successfully. These women include the likes of Joy Phumaphi who was the minister of health in 1999, a time when the country was amid the AIDS crisis. It is through her grit that Botswana became the first African nation to launch a free comprehensive national HIV treatment program.

Gender parity is about the proportional representation of men and women in a given group which in the case is a government. Most governments have more men than women and so to achieve gender parity in governments there would have to be an increase in the number of women in government. Gender parity is important as it leads to a more nurturing society. Women are usually characterized to be nurturing and so more inclusivity of women in governments has seen governments engaging on issues of mental health awareness, a more inclusive education system and more.

Also, gender parity leads to more efficient and productive governments. This is because studies have proved women seem to complete more work than men in a given time. As such increasing the number of women in governments will lead to governments being able to do more in dealing with the issues in their country and resolving more in a short period of time.

Governments with more women have also proved to be a lot healthier. This is due to women being more empathetic than men and as such developing health policies that will lead to healthier societies. This can be proved by the work of Joy Phumaphi who despite opposition made sure that HIV treatment is free to all in Botswana.

Lastly, gender parity in governments leads to economic prosperity. Studies have shown that improvements in gender equality will lead to an increase in the Gross Domestic Product of both developed and developing countries. Gender equality leads to the elimination of barriers that prevent minority groups such as women from entering certain sectors and thus improving productivity. Gender equality also helps exploit the full productive potential of the labor force which helps in sustainable demographic development and an increase in net contributions to fiscal systems that lead to financial gains to states.

If history could be re-constructed to show the contribution that women had into building all that the world is now, then maybe the world will begin to appreciate the need for gender parity. Only then can the world truly build and nurture a woman to be the best she can and fully benefit from her reaching her full potential.